

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Oct. 24, 2003:](#)

## **Region's residential 'salvage yards' a source of pollution**

By Frieda Heaphy, Madera

*(Published in Fresno Bee - Friday, October 24, 2003, 5:44 AM)*

Numerous articles have appeared in The Bee about Valley air quality and the associated health hazards. What about soil and water pollution caused by all the cars in the Valley, running or not, that leak oils, coolant and brake fluid?

I don't know what the situation is in Fresno County, but here in Madera it is out of hand. Drive through any of the older housing tracts surrounding the city and the one thing in common is single-family residences that are surrounded by cars in various states of disrepair and all leaking something.

Not only is each one a small source of pollution, but an eyesore that only brings down property values.

In my neighborhood it seems to be a status symbol, with each house trying to outdo the other by seeing how many cars we can put in the front, back and side yards. I have counted 12 cars at one house alone on my street. Perhaps it is a small auto salvage yard that just hasn't put up a sign yet, but I doubt it.

I would hate to see the Environmental Protection Agency or other government agency turn its attention to individual homeowners as a pollution source that needs to be continuously monitored, but it may come to that one day and it will start in Madera County.

## **Key aspects of plan to reduce smog in Southern California**

The Associated Press

Published in the Bakersfield Californian

Friday October 24, 2003, 12:05:15 AM

Key aspects of the state Air Resources Board plan to help Southern California meet federal clean air standards by 2010:

- Stricter smog checks for personal vehicles.
- Retrofit trucks, buses, gas cargo tankers and repair vehicles to cut emissions. -
- Reduce emissions for consumer products, including nail polish and hairspray.
- Buy old boats that contribute to pollution to get them off the water.
- Introduce electric plug-ins to reduce idling by trucks and ships at truck stops and ports.
- Fit marina fuel pumps with emission control devices.
- Require composting for livestock manure.

Highlights of South Coast Air Quality Management District proposal that were added to ARB plan:

- Use remote sensors to measure tailpipe emissions and identify major polluters.

- Accelerate ARB plans that require a percentage of lawnmowers and gardening equipment sold to be electric.
- Mandatory replacement of pollution control devices, such as catalytic converters, on older cars.

## **Group that fights dirty air funded**

By ERIN WALDNER, Californian staff writer

The Bakersfield Californian

Thursday October 23, 2003, 05:55:11 PM

An organization that strives to improve air quality in the Central Valley has received \$25,000 from the state.

The recipient, the San Joaquin Valley Clean Cities Coalition, is a partnership of public and private agencies and businesses. The coalition's stated goal is to provide a network of alternative fuels, technician training, alternative fuel vehicles, funding and information to area fleet operators.

Linda Urata, coordinator of the San Joaquin Valley Clean Cities Coalition, said the grant is a "great boost" for the group and its partners. She said it comes at a time when funding has not kept up with demand for the coalition's services.

The \$25,000, Urata said, will be used to defray travel and personnel expenses and to finance coalition events in the Central Valley next year.

Urata said The U.S. Department of Energy allocated \$2.48 million for 18 alternative fuel projects, including the San Joaquin Valley Clean Cities Coalition, in California.

The California Energy Commission administered the grants.

Biodiesel, compressed natural gas, hydrogen fuel cells and liquefied natural gas are examples of alternative fuels.

Other projects in California that received grants from the Energy Department include \$150,000 for a compressed natural gas fueling station planned for Oakland; \$150,000 to add natural gas infrastructure to a refuse collection yard in Los Angeles; and \$190,000, the cost difference between diesel and alternative-fueled school buses, for the Bellflower Unified School District.

## **Officials warn forest fire harmful to air quality**

News Brief in the Bakersfield Californian

Oct. 23, 2003

A forest fire near Three Rivers is muddying the air quality in parts of Kern County, according to the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District.

Residents in Fresno, Madera, Tulare and Kern counties who can smell or see smoke should try to remain indoors, recirculate indoor air and seek medical attention if they have prolonged dizziness or breathing problems, according to the district.

## **California joins petition against feds over air standards**

The Associated Press

Published in the Bakersfield Californian

Thursday October 23, 2003, 12:25:12 PM

LOS ANGELES (AP) - California and 11 other states opposing the Bush administration's position on regulating greenhouse gases challenged that policy in federal court on Thursday.

State Attorney General Bill Lockyer said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency acted wrongly this summer in ruling that it had no authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from automobiles.

"This is a very substantial risk to public health, to agriculture, the Sierra snow pack and other things that make California special and habitable," Lockyer said. The other states that jointly filed the petition are Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

The petition argues that carbon dioxide is clearly covered by the Clean Air Act's definition of air pollutants that can be regulated.

"The Bush administration has tried to say yet again that it's not their job to fight global warming," said Bill Corcoran of the Sierra Club, which joined the suit. "In fact, they have both the legal and moral responsibility to tackle global warming pollution."

EPA officials have said the agency cannot address the issue of global warming, which scientists widely believe is affected by gases such as carbon dioxide, without specific direction from Congress.

Lockyer, a Democrat, said he has not spoken with Gov. -elect Arnold Schwarzenegger about the issue. The Republican actor was attacked by some during his campaign for driving a gas-guzzling Hummer.

"I can maintain this action independently as attorney general," Lockyer said.

[\(Stockton\) Record editorial, Oct. 24, 2003:](#)

### **Rules, rules, rules**

The next time a new law passes, look for the hidden cost. Environmentalists and lawmakers who agree with them scream about dirty air, among other things. And they're right, as anyone entering the Central Valley from a higher altitude can tell you. The air is dirty.

So we have legislation creating air pollution control districts charged with making businesses and homeowners comply with rules and regulations designed to clean things up. Still sounds good.

Unless you live in the San Joaquin Valley, where there's a 1,000-permit logjam choking the control district's staff. So businesses stall their plans, waiting for the bureaucratic backlog to break. And it's hard to make much headway on cleaning up the air.

As with most things in life, implementation and follow-through are where you'll find the real challenges. Creating new rules is the easy part.

[Modesto Bee editorial, Oct. 23, 2003:](#)

### **County better to oversee farms than water board**

When tract homes edge up to farming operations, there is often friction. Those who farm for a living -- kicking up dust, spraying chemicals, herding smelly animals -- and those who simply live near farms naturally clash.

So it was fairly unexpected last week when Stanislaus County dairy farmers essentially invited all those suburban bystanders into their business.

Farmers are not looking for advice or investment. They're looking for relief from an approval process they feel will be too slow, too costly and will not be receptive to local input.

On Jan. 1, farming lost its environmental waiver, meaning any change in a farming operation had to pass muster under the California Environmental Quality Act. In turn, that meant the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board in Sacramento had to rule on local impacts of those changes. But the Water Quality Board doesn't have the staff or expertise to make such local decisions. They would have required studies and substantial delays before rendering reasonable decisions. Even the board's staff recognized it wasn't the best entity to be making such decisions.

Farmers know that delays are costly and that studies are even costlier. So, with the water board's blessing, farmers requested that the county -- through issuance of use permits -- become the authorizing agency for modifications to farming operations. The county Planning Commission agreed (8-0) last week and the supervisors are expected to vote next month.

This looks like a rare opportunity for all parties to win -- farmers, their neighbors and the agencies. The Board of Supervisors should embrace this approach for several reasons:

First, it will give the farmers the flexibility they need to keep their operations profitable. That's important to the whole economy; our area benefited to the tune of \$390 million generated by dairy farmers last year.

Second, elected supervisors are going to be more responsive to local citizens -- farmers and their neighbors -- than staff and members of an appointed state board.

Third, and this is probably the best reason, nearby residents will get to voice their opinions about a farmer's plans to change his or her operation before it happens. The neighbors can suggest modifications and compromises that could make such plans more acceptable. That will reduce conflict.

No doubt, people who don't realize their bread and butter is being cultivated a few hundred feet from their new homes still will complain about odors, noise and dust. Those folks should have investigated the area better before moving into a farming zone. On the other hand, those who have been coexisting with a modest-sized farm will be able to gain concessions when the farmer tries to turn it into a megadairy.

So much government control and decision-making has shifted to the state that it's a relief to see some of it returning to local hands, where we expect it will be handled with more efficiency and sensitivity to all those concerned.

[Letter to the Modesto Bee, Oct. 24, 2003:](#)

**Dust, diesel not all that pollutes**

My best friend Roger suffers from asthma. He goes to sleep every night hoping to wake up the next day being able to breathe with no problems. The filthy dust and diesel pollution are not only damaging my friend's health and that of other asthmatics, but also ours.

In the article "Valley farmers act to spare air" (Page A-1, Oct. 13), the reporter describes the great damage to our atmosphere caused by farm dust and diesel tractors and machinery used for agricultural purposes.

No one is able to step outside of their homes without breathing filthy air, but are farm dust and diesel the leading cause of hospitalized asthmatics in Modesto? I believe canneries have a bigger influence on the filthy air.

However, many people don't see it, but all the fruits and vegetables processed by canneries contain chemicals that later on are spread into the atmosphere.

DENISE ROJAS, Escalon